

In the Specification:

Please amend various paragraphs to read as follows:

[0009] Also, the present invention provides a catheter sheath assembly comprising a catheter sheath including a generally tubular sheath body having a proximal end and a distal end and a handle fixedly connected to the proximal end of the sheath body. The assembly also includes a catheter sheath clamp assembly comprising a body having a first end connected to the sheath handle and a second end having a slot extending through the body, and a generally planar pinch member slidably disposed within the slot transversely with respect to the tubular sheath body between an open position and a pinching position. The pinch member includes a first pinch leg having a first tapered free end and a first connected end and a second pinch leg juxtaposed from the first pinch leg. The second pinch leg has a second tapered free end and a second connected end connected to the first connected end. The pinch member is slidable transversely within the slot between a first or open position wherein the first and second tapered free ends are proximate to the slot and a second or closed position wherein the first and second connected ends are proximate to the slot and the first and second pinch legs compress the tubular sheath body closed.

[0011] The present invention also provides a method of inserting a catheter into a catheter sheath, wherein the catheter sheath comprises a proximal end, a distal end and a sheath clamp disposed proximate to the ~~proximate~~ proximal end. The method comprises inserting a catheter sheath into a blood vessel of a patient; securing the sheath clamp to the sheath to restrict fluid flow between the ~~proximate~~ proximal end and the distal end of the sheath; inserting a catheter into the proximal end of the sheath and advancing the catheter toward the sheath

clamp; releasing the sheath clamp from the sheath; advancing the catheter through the sheath to the distal end of the sheath; and removing the sheath from the blood vessel.

[0027] The catheter sheath 100 includes a proximal end 102, a distal end 104, and an elongated, generally cylindrical sheath body 106 extending between the proximal end 102 and the distal end 104. The ~~body~~ sheath body 106 includes a generally cylindrical passageway 107 that extends through the body 106 between the proximal end 102 and the distal end 104. The passageway 107 is sized to allow the dilator (not shown) to be inserted through the sheath body 106 from the proximal end 102 of the sheath 100 to the distal end 104 of the sheath 100 such that the dilator engages the sheath body 106 surrounding the passageway 107 in a slight frictional fit.

[0032] The body 122 includes a slot 128 proximate to the free end 126 of the body 122. The slot 128 extends generally perpendicular to the plane P. A generally planar pinch member 130 extends through the slot 128 transversely with respect to the tubular sheath body 106, to releasably pinch the sheath body 106, restricting fluid flow between the proximal end 102 of the sheath body 106 and the distal end 104 of the sheath body 106.

[0035] The second leg 150 is preferably a mirror image of the first leg 140 across the centerline 132. The second leg includes a first longitudinal side 152 and a second longitudinal side 154. The second longitudinal side 154 extends generally parallel to the first longitudinal side 152 for a predetermined length from the connected end 136, then tapers away from the centerline 132 toward the free end 134 ~~[[0f]]~~ of the pinch member 130. A retainer nub 156 extends away from the first longitudinal side 152 of the second leg 150 proximate to the free end 134 of the pinch member 130. A second rib 157 extends along the second longitudinal side

154 toward the first leg 140.

[0040] When the clamp 120 is moved to a closed position, by moving the pinch member 130 from left to right, from the position shown in Figs. 1 and 2 to the position shown in Figs. 4 and 5, the pinch member 130 is retained within the slot 128 by the sheath 120. In this position, the sheath body 106 is disposed in the narrower portion 160b of the channel 160 and ~~pinches the sheath body 106~~ is pinched closed by the clamp 130, restricting fluid communication between the proximal end 102 of the sheath 100 and the distal end 104 of the sheath 100, either in the form of blood flowing from the distal end 104 of the sheath 100 toward the proximal end 102 of the sheath 100 or air flowing from the proximal end 102 of the sheath 100 toward the distal end 104 of the sheath 100. The first and second ribs 147, 157 provide narrow points of contact between the pinch member 130 and the sheath 100, increasing pressure between the pinch member 130 and the sheath 100, thereby magnifying the ability of the pinch member 130 to restrict fluid flow through the sheath 100.

Please insert the following new paragraphs [0040.1] and [0040.2]:

[0040.1] As the pinch member 130 is slid from left to right, as shown from Fig. 1 to Fig. 4, the sheath body 106 is directed by the wider portion 160a of the channel 160 toward the narrower portion 160b of the channel 160. As the sheath body 106 is forced into the narrower portion 160b of the channel 160, the sheath body 106 forces the first and second legs 140, 150, respectively, compress the sheath body 106 into the passageway 107. The memory of the material from which the pinch member 130 is constructed forces the first and second legs 140, 150 at the free end 134 of the pinch member 130 toward each other, so that the sheath body 106

remains compressed into the passageway 107 between the second longitudinal side 144 of the first leg 140 and the second longitudinal side 154 of the second leg 150.

[0040.2] In operation, the sheath 100, with a dilator (not shown) inserted through the passageway 107 in the sheath body 106, is inserted over a guide wire (not shown) during insertion of a catheter into a blood vessel of a patient, preferably using techniques known to those skilled in the art. At this time, the sheath clamp 120 is in the open position, as shown in Fig. 1. After the sheath 100 and dilator are properly inserted, the guide wire and the dilator are then removed by pulling the guide wire, and then the dilator, proximally through the sheath 100. As the dilator clears the plane of the pinch member 130, the sheath clamp 120 is closed by sliding the pinch member 130 from left to right, as shown from Fig. 1 to Fig. 4. Preferably, the inserting physician is able to grasp the sheath body 106 with several fingers of one hand and, using the same hand, place his thumb on the connected end 136 of the pinch member 130. The physician uses the thumb to slide the pinch member 130 from left to right, from the position shown in Fig. 1 to the position shown in Fig. 4.

[0041] Referring now to Fig. 6, the preferably elongated body 122 of the sheath clamp 120 allows the pinch member 130 to be disposed a distance “d” from the proximal end 102 of the sheath 100. The distance “d” allows a catheter, such as the catheter 200 shown in Fig. 6, having a first lumen 202 and a second lumen 204 with differing lengths, with a distance “D” separating the distal tip of the first lumen 200 from the distal tip of the second lumen 204, such as a SPLIT CATH® catheter, to be inserted into the sheath 100 while the pinch member 130 is in a closed position, as shown in Fig. 6, allowing the inserting physician to insert the first and second lumens 202, 204 into the sheath 100, as shown in Fig. 7, without the patient’s blood

flowing from the proximal end 102 of the sheath 100. Preferably, the distance “d” is at least as great as the distance “D”, so that the distal tips of both lumens 202, 204 may be inserted into the sheath 100 while the pinch member 130 is in a closed position. In catheter 200, the first lumen 202 is longer than the second lumen 204 to reduce recirculation of the patient’s blood during hemodialysis.

Please delete paragraphs [0042], [0043], [0044] and [0045].

Please insert the following new paragraph [0048.1]:

[0048.1] While the catheter 200 shown in Figs. 6 and 7 is a split-tip catheter having lumens 202, 204 of differing lengths, those skilled in the art will recognize that other types of catheters, including single lumen catheters, such as the TESIO® catheter, may also be used with the sheath 100 and clamp 120 without departing from the scope of the present invention.